

NINE YEARS AFTER ALUMINUM TUBE FEAR- MONGERING, JUDY MILLER IS BACK AT IT

Murdoch's empire has a funny approach to its own mantra, "[never forget](#)." On what is effectively the ninth anniversary of Judy Miller's aluminum tube extravaganza, she's back at work [fear-mongering in the WSJ](#).

This time, she's serving as NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly's stenographer. It appears Kelly decided to use the occasion that other anniversary, 9/11, to sow propaganda to counter [the work the AP has done](#) exposing Kelly's CIA-on-the-Hudson.

A specter has haunted the New York Police Department during this week's torrent of 10th anniversary commemorations of 9/11—the 13 terrorist plots against the city in the past decade that have failed or been thwarted thanks partly to NYPD counterterrorism efforts.

Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and his 50,000-strong department know that the 9/11 gatherings are an occasion not only to reflect on that terrible day. They're also a prime target for al Qaeda and other Islamist extremists who long to convince the world, and perhaps themselves, that they're still capable of killing in the name of their perverse interpretation of Islam.

Commissioner Kelly allocates some \$330 million of his \$4.6 billion annual budget and 1,200 of his staff to counterterrorism. He and his staff, not surprisingly, spent the week bolstering security at the remembrance gatherings throughout the city. On Wednesday, he came to the Manhattan Institute to tout the NYPD's counterterrorism record and defend his

department against press allegations that his intelligence division has been spying illegally on Muslims and infringing on their privacy and civil rights. [my emphasis]

As is typical for Judy, she parrots the crafty misdirection of her sources.

The police have to factor terrorism into “everything we do,” Mr. Kelly said. If that means following leads that take NYPD undercover detectives into mosques, Islamic bookstores, Muslim student associations, cafes and nightclubs, so be it.

A journalist, after all, would have pointed out that the NYPD’s spooks aren’t simply following leads. as Kelly suggested. Rather [they have sought](#) to map out entire communities, based solely on ethnic and racial profiling.

The Demographics Unit, a squad of 16 officers fluent in a total of at least five languages, was told to map ethnic communities in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut and identify where people socialize, shop and pray.

Once that analysis was complete, according to documents obtained by the AP, the NYPD would “deploy officers in civilian clothes throughout the ethnic communities.”

Nor does Judy show any more critical assessment when listing 7 of those 13 plots against NYC that Kelly mentioned, leaving the incorrect impression that Judy’s description that these were “thwarted thanks partly to NYPD counterterrorism efforts” applies to all these plots.

You can check out the real story of those 7 cases below. As I’ve pointed out, the NYPD failed to discover the two most developed plots. At least from what is publicly known, the NYPD was only involved in 4 of the 7 cases and the ones it led have been criticized as entrapment or mere aspirational plots. And there’s a bit of leakiness from the NYPD that on at least one

(and possibly two) occasions has hurt ongoing investigations.

So here's what New Yorkers have gotten for Ray Kelly's \$3.3 billion investment (assuming the \$330 million cited by Judy has remained constant) in his very own spy department.

- 1) It was an undercover officer in an Islamic bookstore who helped stop Shahawar Matin Siraj, a homegrown Muslim extremist and self-professed al Qaeda admirer, from bombing the Herald Square subway station during the 2004 Republican convention, Mr. Kelly said.

The NYPD "undercover officer" in this case, Osama Eldawoody, had infiltrated Siraj's Bay Ridge Islamic community, [getting paid](#) almost \$100,000 for his three year effort setting up the plot. He [incited](#) Siraj and his young, schizophrenic friend, James Elshafay, in part by showing pictures from the Abu Ghraib torture scandal. Siraj never had any explosives—Eldawoody was supposed to provide those—and in fact tried to back out of the plot days before he was arrested.

- 2) Another undercover officer prevented homegrown terrorists Ahmed Ferhani, 26, and Mohamed Mamdouh, 20, from bombing a Manhattan synagogue and trying to "take out the entire building."

As with the Siraj case, the NYPD had long cultivated Ferhani (according to his lawyers, like Elshafay, he [is mentally ill](#)) and Mamdouh; the cops provided the arms used as an excuse to arrest them. The NYPD tripped the sting just days after the killing of Osama bin Laden. The Feds [declined to take the case](#), questioning whether the gun deal was really a terrorism case and whether the case would hold up in court. And the grand jury [rejected](#) the most serious charges against the men.

- 3) Yes, he declared, if that was what was needed to keep tabs on the likes of Carlos Almonte and Mohammed Alessa—al Qaeda

sympathizers arrested en route to Somalia at JFK Airport in 2010 “who were determined to receive terrorist training abroad only to return home to kill us here.”

Almonte and Alessa were [first identified](#) in 2006 via the FBI tip line. They traveled to Jordan (Jordan?! Who goes to Jordan to join a terrorist group?) allegedly to try join terrorists, but failed to do so. It’s unclear when the NYPD first assigned an undercover officer to the two (or why the NYPD did so instead of the FBI), but the first mention of that officer came shortly after the Nidal Hasan attack, so it’s possible the NYPD decided to more aggressively pursue people who had read or listened to Anwar al-Awlaki’s and other English-language jihadist propaganda after that attack. The men definitely did intend to try to join a terrorist group in Somalia (though there are reasons to suspect the undercover officer suggested it; and the evidence suggests they wanted to engaged in jihad there, not in the US) and they did listen to jihadist propaganda. But the bulk of the evidence simply consists of the number of times they trained using gyms or video games and accounts of the number of Camelbak water systems they bought.

4) Sigint was key in disrupting at least two of the most serious al Qaeda plots targeting New York since 9/11: the 2006 “Liquid Bomb Plot,” or “Operation Overt,” in which 25 British citizens of Pakistani descent targeted some seven transatlantic commercial flights from London to North America;

This was, by all appearances, a real, serious plot. While I’m sure the NYPD was alerted to the plot, there’s no reason to believe the NYPD was ever central to the investigation. And Dick Cheney’s [sabotage](#) of the British investigation into it would later lead to Najibullah Zazi’s attempted plot.

5) Operation Highrise, an attempt to use suicide bombers to blow up New York City subways in 2009. The homegrown Islamist in

that plot was Najibullah Zazi, an Afghan immigrant with al Qaeda ties who grew up in New York City and staged his operation from there and Colorado.

Not only did the NSA and FBI discover this plot, and not only did the NYPD not discover it in spite of using Zazi's imam as an informant, but they [damaged the investigation](#) by tipping Zazi off through that imam.

6) Another serious plot that was disrupted thanks to Internet intercepts was a 2006 scheme by Assem Hammoud, a 31-year-old Lebanese al Qaeda member, and several other still unnamed Islamists—all overseas—to flood Lower Manhattan by setting off explosives in the PATH railway tunnels under the Hudson River.

This plot was apparently discovered via chat room surveillance, with FBI leading the investigation (though Peter King [was quoted](#) as saying the NYPD was involved in the investigation). FBI sources described the plot as aspirational, not the "serious plot" Judy describes. Not only hadn't suspects traveled to the US, they hadn't yet done the Pakistani training they hoped would prepare them for the attack. Of particular interest, international cooperation was disrupted on this investigation because someone leaked news of it to the NY Daily News. Given that after that leak NYC's leaders used it to call for more counter-terrorism funding, and given that [some reports](#) insisted the Feds would continue to share information with local authorities, it seems likely that someone in NY leaked it.

7) Faisal Shazad, a middle-class Pakistani-American resident of Connecticut, failed last year to detonate a bomb in Times Square only because he received too little training in Pakistan.

And Faisal Shahzad. Judy doesn't mention that the NYPD's investigations outside of NYC didn't include Shahzad's community in CT nor the *hawala*

he used in Long Island to obtain funding from Pakistan. But at least she included it in her list, implicitly admitting that the CIA-on-the-Hudson she was celebrating didn't find this plot.

So the story Kelly wanted Judy to tell was that the 1,200 people spying on New Yorkers have done something. And, an obedient stenographer as always, that's what she uncritically wrote. But even a cursory look behind the claims she makes shows Kelly's spooks have largely been entrapping dull-witted young Muslim men and hurting FBI investigations with leaks.

Be afraid, Judy says. But it's clear she's mistaken about what we need to fear.